

ON TESSAROPS MARITIMA, A NOMEN OBLITUM IN SPIDERS¹

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In 1959 Bonnet correctly indicated that *Tessarops maritima* Rafinesque (1821) had been overlooked by American workers, the name not appearing in the catalogs of Banks, or Petrunkevitch, nor in the works of Comstock or myself. I may add that the name does not appear in Marx's catalog, nor in the publications of any American araneologist, nor in the recent "Katalog" of Roewer. Possibly the reason for these omissions lies in a remark made by Thorell to the effect that the species is so poorly described that one cannot be certain it is even a spider! Moreover, as the generic name indicates, this creature has only four eyes, making it difficult to place in any known family. Although Rafinesque set up a new genus he did not attempt to place it in any family. True, the description was meager, but it is obviously not in the Tetrablemmidae, and Bonnet had cited it as belonging in the "Drassidae?" [sic!]

Rafinesque supplied the body length, color, and some notes on the biology. These latter include the fact that it does not build a snare, runs among stones and over the sand, may feed upon crustaceans, and is common along the Connecticut and Long Island coasts. All of which very well fits our common and well known lycosid, *Arctosa littoralis* (Hentz). (See Kaston, 1948). After careful consideration I have concluded that the particular female specimen Rafinesque selected for his detailed description (no type specimen is known) happened to be afflicted with an ocular anomaly. We know that ocular anomalies are the most common reported in spiders (Kaston, 1962). However, at the time of Thorell's work (1869) only three such anomalies had been previously reported, and these only in the form of brief

¹Accepted for publication: November 26, 1971 [3.0153].

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incidental remarks by Blackwall (1861), so undoubtedly easily missed by Thorell. Two of the three cases were among lycosids, and in recent years many more have been reported including those where only four eyes were present, as in *Tessarops*.

There is hardly any doubt that, despite its priority, all workers would agree that in the interests of nomenclatorial stability the well known name of long standing should be retained, and the *nomen oblitum* be suppressed under Article 23 (b) of the International Code of Zoological Nomenclature.

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Descriptors: Arachnida; nomen oblitum.